

last 4 years, it is what made him such an incredible representative for our office throughout Central Oregon.

When asked to share her thoughts about BJ, one of our former team members who worked very closely with him over many years had this to say:

BJ is the calm in the storm. He is a steady, intelligent, caring, supportive teammate who cares beyond measure for his constituents. He has worked tirelessly to solve problems and bring Oregon tax dollars home to Central Oregon.

She continued:

Moving to his home office during COVID while continuing to be responsive to both teammates and constituents was a smooth transition because BJ handles challenges with aplomb.

And she closed by saying:

He is a treasure and just a wonderful human being.

And I couldn't say it any better.

BJ is the calm in the storm. BJ is a wonderful human being. BJ does work tirelessly to solve problems.

That is why, when the Bootleg fire struck Oregon last year, the third largest fire in our State's history, it was BJ who took charge of reaching out to and connecting with the communities impacted by the devastation. And it is a good thing he was, because community members, Tribal leaders, landowners, business owners, local electeds, agency leaders, relief agencies, and conservationists all looked to BJ to be there for them.

They knew that he would reach out. They knew he would listen to what they needed. They knew that he would do whatever it took to be there to respond to those challenges.

BJ has been the central driver on many major projects. One was getting funding for irrigation piping projects to help Oregon farmers get more water, while simultaneously putting more water back in our rivers, a positive environmental effect.

A second was helping an Oregonian Tribe find justice by finally repealing the fraudulent 1865 treaty that robbed them of their hunting and fishing rights.

A third was almost doubling the size of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument for future generations of Oregonians to enjoy, a monument that comes at the intersection of three critical mountain ranges and has flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world.

BJ is the kind of person who takes extra pride in drafting a customized letter to a student or making a one-off phone call to a constituent looking for help or advice because taking that small extra step can restore their faith and their trust in government.

But anyone who knows BJ wouldn't be surprised by any of this because they know how intensely he believes in public service. It is how he was raised. It is what he saw and learned growing up from his father, who was a good friend of mine, Ben Westlund, whom I had the privilege of serving with in the Oregon statehouse before he went on to

serve as an Oregon senator and Oregon treasurer.

We lost Ben about 12 years ago, before BJ came to work on my team, but I know how proud he would be if here with us today to see all the great things that his son has done and will continue to do in service to the people of Oregon.

So, BJ, thank you for all you have done throughout your time on Team Merkley to help build a better world. The team and I wish you well as you begin the next chapter of your life, and we can't wait to see all of the great things that you will continue to do and to achieve in the years to come.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

CORPORATE GREED

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the American people are increasingly outraged by the level of corporate greed that we are seeing in this country. As you know, while prices are rapidly increasing, corporate profits are soaring: in the oil industry in what we pay at the gas pumps; in the food industry in what we pay in grocery stores; in housing and in so many other areas. Meanwhile, while the very, very rich get richer, because of inflation, many workers are now seeing a decline in their real wages.

During this pandemic, unbelievably—and I hope that everybody knows this—while workers have been struggling, the billionaire class, people who are worth at least \$1 billion, have seen a \$2 trillion increase in their wealth; and the level of income and wealth inequality today is the highest that it has been in over 100 years.

Two people—Mr. Musk and Mr. Bezos—now own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of American society—over 130 million people. Two people own more wealth than the bottom 130 million Americans.

In the midst of all of this—inflation, inequality, corporate greed—working people have declared loudly and clearly that enough is enough. We must end the corporate greed that is hurting so many of our families. Workers are now fighting back in a way that I have not seen for a very long time to improve their standard of living, to get the wages and benefits they desperately need, and to get a seat at the negotiating table in a way that has not taken place in a very, very long time.

Workers throughout this country are now in the process of organizing unions at a grassroots level and are prepared to go out on strike when the greed of large corporations prevents them from receiving decent wages and decent benefits. During the last couple of years, I

have personally been involved in a number of union-organizing campaigns and strikes throughout the country—from John Deere, Nabisco, and Kellogg's in the Midwest to the Warrior Met strike in Alabama—which continues today—to the Kroger grocery store strike in Colorado, and many others—and I have to say that I have been incredibly impressed by the solidarity and the courage of those workers who are prepared to stand up for justice against very powerful corporate interests.

As I am sure the Presiding Officer knows, a historic union victory was achieved nearly 1 month ago by Amazon workers in Staten Island. Amazon is one of the most profitable and one of the most powerful corporations in America. It is also one of the largest employers in our country, with close to a million workers.

We are talking, when we talk about Amazon, about a company that made a record-breaking \$36 billion in profit last year—\$36 billion. And that was a 453-percent increase from where it was before the pandemic. In other words, Amazon today is doing unbelievably well, and, in fact, it is doing better as a company than it has ever done before.

We are talking about a company that is owned by Mr. Jeff Bezos, the second wealthiest person in America, worth \$170 billion. Let me repeat that. He is not the wealthiest; he is only the second wealthiest, worth \$170 billion.

And here is something that is interesting and tells you about our corrupt political system and our regressive and unfair tax system. We are talking about a company—Amazon—that makes huge profits, that paid nothing—zero—in Federal income taxes in 2017 and 2018 and paid a lower tax rate, Federal tax rate, than a nurse or a firefighter last year, after making billions in profits. The average nurse, firefighter, or grocery store worker has an effective tax rate that is higher than what Amazon's was last year.

We are also talking about Mr. Bezos as an individual, who, in a given year, despite his extraordinary wealth, has also paid zero—nothing—in Federal taxes.

It is funny. On Sunday, I was in New York City, and I stopped in a McDonald's and was talking to one of the guys who works there. I asked him how much money he made. He makes \$15 an hour. And then he came back and said: Well, they take out over a dollar in Federal taxes. So a guy working in McDonald's for \$15 an hour probably has a higher tax rate than the second wealthiest person in this country.

That is what happens here in Washington when you are somebody like Mr. Bezos or some other billionaire and you make a lot of campaign contributions and you have an army of accountants and lawyers who help you avoid your tax responsibilities.

Mr. President, during the pandemic the last several years, Mr. Bezos, like

many other billionaires, did very, very well. In fact, since March of 2020, Mr. Bezos became \$65 billion richer, in just a couple of years—huge increase in his wealth. So, Mr. President, if you ask me why people in this country are really, really angry, I will tell you, and that has a lot to do with the reality that, in the midst of the pandemic, in the midst of the massive economic dislocation that we have seen, we have lost tens of thousands of essential workers, people who live paycheck to paycheck, who had no choice. They had to go into a warehouse. They had to go into a grocery store. They had to drive a bus. They had to do all of the things that keep America going; and as a result of that, having to go to work, thousands of them contracted COVID and many thousands actually died. That is what happens when you are an ordinary worker in America living paycheck to paycheck. You don't have a choice. You have got to go to work to feed your family.

And during that same period, the billionaires and Mr. Bezos made out like bandits. Bezos himself became \$65 billion richer. Jeff Bezos has enough money to own a \$500 million yacht—\$500 million yacht. He has enough money to afford a \$175 million estate in Beverly Hills. He has enough money to afford a \$78 million, 14-acre estate in Maui. He has enough money to own a \$23 million mansion right here in Washington, DC, which has 25 bathrooms. So if you are in Washington, DC, and you have to go to the bathroom, you know someplace that you can possibly go. Mr. Bezos has enough money to buy a rocket ship to blast William Shatner to the edge of outer space.

Yet even though Mr. Bezos can afford all of these mansions and his \$500 million yacht and his rocket ship, Mr. Bezos refuses to pay his workers at Amazon decent wages, decent benefits, or provide decent working conditions.

That, Mr. President, is what excessive greed is all about, and that is why the American people are saying enough is enough. The American people want action from the President; they want action from Congress; and we have got to deliver.

From the very beginning of the union-organizing effort until today, Mr. Bezos and his company have done everything possible—legal and illegal—to defeat the union effort. In fact, Amazon cannot even come to grips with the reality that workers in Staten Island won their union election fair and square. In order to stall the process out, Amazon's lawyers have appealed that election result to the NLRB. Their strategy, as is often the strategy of corporate interests confronting unions, is to use their incredible resources, their unending amount of money, to stall, stall, and stall.

In every way possible, Amazon is refusing to negotiate a fair first contract with the Amazon Labor Union. In fact, Amazon has been engaged in a massive

attempt to undermine the union organizing drive in direct violation of labor laws and regulations.

Let's be clear. Amazon has already been penalized more than \$75 million for breaking Federal discrimination and labor laws. Amazon is currently being sued by the National Labor Relations Board to reinstate a worker who was illegally fired for organizing a union. To date, there are currently 59—59—unfair labor cases against Amazon pending at the National Labor Relations Board. Several current and former employees at Amazon have alleged that the company has engaged in illegal harassment and discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Amazon misclassifies delivery drivers as independent contractors rather than employees in order to evade tax, wage, and benefit responsibilities.

Amazon's inadequate workplace safety policies also pose grave risks to workers. If you can believe it—and this really is quite unbelievable—according to a New York Times investigation, Amazon warehouses have a 150-percent turnover rate—150 percent a year. Workers come into the warehouses; they are worked as hard as humanly possible. And then after they are exhausted and physically broken down, they leave and then a whole new set of workers comes in and the process continues. Further, in some locations, their workplace injury rates are more than 2½ times the industry average.

I was in Staten Island on Sunday talking to some Amazon workers, and they tell me that injuries take place every single day, and many of them go unreported. Last December, six Amazon workers died after they were required to continue working during unsafe weather conditions in a warehouse that did not have appropriate safety facilities or policies.

It is abundantly clear that time and time again, Amazon has engaged in illegal anti-union activity. Amazon may be a large and profitable corporation, it may be owned by one of the wealthiest people in America, but it cannot be allowed to continue to violate the law and the rights of its employees. If working people are asked to obey the law, they do it, or they get punished. That same principle must be upheld for a large and powerful corporation like Amazon.

That is why this morning, I sent a letter to President Biden urging him to sign an Executive order to prohibit companies like Amazon that have violated labor laws from receiving Federal contracts paid for by the taxpayers of America.

Let me quote directly from the letter:

Dear President Biden, last September, I was delighted to hear you State that you “intend to be the most pro-union President leading the most pro-union administration in American history.”

That is from President Biden.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, where too many workers are falling

behind, your sentiment [Mr. President] is exactly right. We need to build the trade union movement in America and allow [more] workers to engage in collective bargaining.

One of the most effective ways for you [President Biden] to begin accomplishing this important goal would be to ensure that no corporation that is engaged in illegal anti-union activities receives a contract paid for by the taxpayers of the United States.

That would be enormously effective in curtailing the illegal activities of companies like Amazon. I then continued in saying in my letter to the President:

As you will recall [Mr. President], during the presidential campaign you promised to “institute a multi-year federal debarment for all employers who illegally oppose unions” and to “ensure federal contracts only go to employers who sign neutrality agreements committing not to run anti-union campaigns.”

That is what President Biden said as a candidate for President.

Then I say in my letter:

That campaign promise was exactly right. Today, I am asking you to fulfill that promise . . . As you may know, Amazon, one of the largest and most profitable corporations in America, is the poster child as to why this anti-union busting Executive Order is needed now more than ever.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

APRIL 26, 2022.

President JOSEPH R. BIDEN,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BIDEN: Last September, I was delighted to hear you state that you “intend to be the most pro-union President leading the most pro-union administration in American history.”

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, where too many workers are falling behind, your sentiment is exactly right. We need to build the trade union movement in America and allow more workers to engage in collective bargaining.

One of the most effective ways for you to begin accomplishing this important goal would be to ensure that no corporation that is engaged in illegal anti-union activities receives a contract paid for by the taxpayers of the United States.

As you will recall, during the presidential campaign you promised to “institute a multi-year federal debarment for all employers who illegally oppose unions” and to “ensure federal contracts only go to employers who sign neutrality agreements committing not to run anti-union campaigns.” That campaign promise was exactly right. Today, I am asking you to fulfill that promise.

The essence of your plan for strengthening union organizing was to make sure that federal dollars do not flow into the hands of unscrupulous employers who engage in union-busting, participate in wage theft, or violate labor law.

In order to implement that plan, I urge you to sign an Executive Order preventing companies that violate federal labor laws from contracting with the federal government.

As you may know, Amazon, one of the largest and most profitable corporations in America, is the poster child as to why this anti-union busting Executive Order is needed now more than ever.

According to filings with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Amazon spent over \$4 million on consultants last year alone in an effort to prevent its warehouses from unionizing. As part of their illegal anti-union activity, they forced workers to attend closed-door anti-union meetings and discriminated against pro-union workers. After workers in Staten Island, New York voted overwhelmingly to join the independent Amazon Labor Union, Amazon has not only refused to negotiate a first contract with them but refuses to recognize that the union exists even though the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) certified their union victory.

Amazon has been penalized more than \$75 million for breaking federal discrimination and wage laws and is currently being sued by the NLRB to reinstate a worker who was illegally fired for organizing a union. The NLRB has found multiple instances of illegal opposition to unions by Amazon, and there are currently 59 open Unfair Labor Practice cases pending before the NLRB. Numerous current and former employees have alleged that Amazon engaged in illegal harassment and discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. Amazon misclassifies delivery drivers as independent contractors rather than employees to evade tax, wage, and benefit responsibilities. Amazon's inadequate workplace safety policies also pose grave risks to workers. In some cases, their workplace injury rates are more than 2.5 times the industry average. Last December, six Amazon workers died after they were required to continue working during unsafe weather conditions in a warehouse that did not have appropriate safety facilities or policies.

Mr. President: It is abundantly clear that time and time again Amazon has engaged in illegal anti-union activity. Amazon may be a large and profitable corporation, it may be owned by one of the wealthiest people in America, but it cannot be allowed to continue to violate the law and the rights of its employees. The time has come to tell Amazon that if it wants another federal contract, it must obey the law.

Since 2004, Amazon has received thousands of federal contracts worth billions of dollars. The Washington Post, also owned by Mr. Bezos, reported that Amazon is in line to receive a cloud contract from the National Security Agency worth up to \$10 billion—a contract that it should not receive as long as it continues to violate labor laws. Another Bezos-owned company, Blue Origin, may also receive a contract from NASA worth up to \$10 billion to fly a spaceship to the moon after more than 20 current and former employees alleged that this company repeatedly discriminated against workers and did not adhere to safety protocols.

Mr. President: Taxpayer dollars should not go to companies like Amazon and multibillionaires like Jeff Bezos who repeatedly break the law.

And let's be clear, it is not just Amazon and Blue Origin. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, federal contractors were required to pay nearly \$225 million in back wages to workers for Service Contract Act violations between 2014 and 2019. An investigation completed by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions found that nearly 30 percent of the top 200 violators of workplace safety and wage theft were government contractors.

The federal government spends more than \$600 billion each year on contracts to thousands of companies who employ more than 4 million contract workers. These workers, just like every worker in America, deserve fair pay and benefits, safe workplaces, and the right to a union.

I urge you to ban companies who break federal labor laws from receiving federal contracts.

Sincerely,

BERNARD SANDERS,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, President Biden, more than any other President I can recall, has talked over and over again about being pro-union. I appreciate very much what the President has said, and I know him to be absolutely sincere when he says it. But just this afternoon, in an article published in *POLITICO*, an article that dealt with my letter to the President, this is what the article said:

A White House official said that the President "has stated consistently and firmly that every worker in every state must have a free and fair choice to join a union and the right to bargain collectively with their employer." The official, who declined to be named, added that Biden believes "there should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, and no anti-union propaganda from employers while workers are making that vitally important choice about a union."

That is a statement from a White House spokesman this afternoon.

What I would say is that what this official said that President Biden doesn't want is precisely what is happening in Amazon right now. There is intimidation. There is coercion. There are threats and anti-union propaganda. In fact, what President Biden says should not be happening is precisely what is happening at Amazon.

Therefore, it is my view that the time for talk is over. The time for action is now. Taxpayer dollars should not go to companies like Amazon and multibillionaires like Jeff Bezos who repeatedly break the law. No government—not the Federal Government, not the State government, and not the city government—should be handing out corporate welfare to union busters and labor law violators.

Today, I say to President Biden: You promised to prevent union busters like Amazon from receiving lucrative contracts from the Federal Government. Keep that promise.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ORRIN G. HATCH

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Orrin G. Hatch will be remembered for many things. His 42 years of service in this body are marked by successes; historic and prolific legislation; and, of course, statesmanship. He served longer as a U.S. Senator than any other in the history of the State of Utah or in the history of the Republican Party.

At his retirement, he had passed more bills into law than any other legislator alive, an astounding 750. While the record of his service is remarkable and memorable, I invite the Senate and the Nation to remember Senator Orrin

Hatch by the things that he remembered every day, here in the Senate and in his private life.

Every day upon entering his Senate office, Orrin Hatch would look upon a prominently hung painting depicting his Utah pioneer grandfather and great-grandfather as they were fording a stream on horseback. This image, like so much else in his life, was a reminder of Senator Hatch's pioneer legacy, his ancestry, and destiny.

In Utah, there is almost no more honorable title than that of pioneer. In the particular parlance of our State, a pioneer is not merely someone who goes where others haven't gone before. No, a pioneer looks toward the future without forgetting who he or she is. A pioneer, like those who settled the Salt Lake Valley and much of the western United States, does so not out of conquest or in search of glory; a pioneer goes and works out of duty and responsibility and faith.

Orrin Hatch always remembered his roots. Raised the son of a mechanical laborer, he grew up in a family of little means. Orrin was one of nine children raised in a cramped Depression-era home without indoor plumbing. Two of Orrin's siblings died young. Another, his older brother Jesse, gave the ultimate sacrifice as a turret gunner flying over Austria mere months before the Allied victory in Europe.

Orrin always remembered this example of work and sacrifice from his parents and from his brother Jesse. The sense of duty to God, family, and Nation was the primary driver throughout his life.

He served a 2-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ohio. He became the first in his family to graduate from college, attending Brigham Young University. He met Elaine Hansen, and the couple married in 1957. They later returned to Pittsburgh, PA, and Orrin completed law school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, while living in what had previously served as a chicken coop in his parents' backyard. He worked as a metalworker and as a janitor to provide for his family while attending law school.

Never one to make much of a fuss about it, Orrin Hatch just did the work that was expected of him, and he did it remarkably well. He knew that life was not easy and that he couldn't expect handouts. He developed the reputation of a fighter, and while a dedicated friend with an inviting laugh, he would never forget the lessons he had learned young while in the amateur boxing ring.

After moving back to Utah and running a successful law practice in Salt Lake City, Orrin ran for the Senate to fight for the moral fiber and everyday work ethic of Americans that he felt was not being represented adequately in Washington, DC. He won, and he set out to defend family values and constitutional principles.

He would remember to do so throughout his career, pioneering the Hatch